Skaducation Request for archive document:

The Supernova alliance, and the skaducation wing of it, request that you contribute to the internet archive on Ska that is being developed. The end goal is to be able to develop curriculum about of the donated articles. Please take the time to follow the below instructions to create a document that can be shared with everyone who visits the archive. This document needs to be for educators and teachers to create a basic level understanding of ska and its history, culture, and other elements, to be used in a classroom at any level. Please indicate what level on the below form or leave blank if it is for all levels.

Overarching goal:

The goal of this project is to create a collection of different buckets filled with information of ska that anyone can go to for their classroom or research needs, to develop curriculum or further research and study.

Expectations of document:

- Must be formatted in 12 pt times new roman font and double spaced to follow all MLA format guidelines.
- At least 800 words but no more than 1200 words.
- It must be referenced with endnotes and a Works Cited page if any material is quoted.
- Grammar and syntax are perfect.
- Think of this as an encyclopedia type entry on the topic.
- Include links to your published work or anything that you may think is relevant

The first categories available to write about are:

History Bucket:

How ska started

History of ska in Jamaica

History of ska in England

History of ska in America

History of ska in any other country

Music bucket:

Drum styles

Guitar styles/Tab

Horn style

Sheet music for various instruments

Ways of playing

Production Bucket:

Engineering techniques

Drum tuning

Guitar/Bass Rigs and setups

Recording strategies

Live mixing

Videography

Dub techniques

Instruments Bucket:

Historical instruments eg: Don Drummond’s trombone

Contemporary

Any Other Ideas:

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Name:

Email address:

Affiliation:

Bucket:

Word count:

Links:

Age/Grade Level:

Title:

Text:

Example Document from *Music in American Life: an encyclopedia of the songs, styles, stars, and stories that shaped our culture* ed. Edmondson, Jacqueline, by Eric Abbey, Ph.D.

Street Performing in America

Street performing, or busking, is the performance by entertainers in a public place for the purpose of gratuity. This entertainment was extremely important within American Music and has shaped many different eras in our society. Street performance can take on many different forms and consists of solo or group performance. This article will focus specifically on the music within street performing, but this category can be greatly expanded to include medicine shows, juggling, mime, or any other form of art that is performed in public places known as the pitch. Effective street performers use the pitch to involve the audience and draw them into the world of the performance. The variety that comes along with this type of show is immense and continuously pushes the boundaries of what is considered music. Street performance has been a part of American music from the beginning of the country.

The historical significance of street performing begins with Benjamin Franklin in 1718. It continues through the one man bands of the 19th century, the folk singers and bands in the 1960s predominately in San Francisco and includes the Naked Cowboy and groups like Playing for Change in our contemporary world. Throughout this history, the music has

taken on an extremely wide variety of formats. From the brass bands of New Orleans to the singing saw, street performing represents the essence of American music. Performers can be found on any city street playing music for the love of the song and to survive. The setup is generally as a “Circle Show,” “Walk By” or “Café Busking” and is always intended to give the audience something that they may not see in their daily lives. The entertainment and ambience created by these performers focuses on gaining the crowd’s appreciation and gratuity. The music, at times, reflects the political climate of the country and then becomes a form of direct protest from the people. American music has been extensively influenced and changed by people performing for the love of the music and simply for the ability to live on the streets of its cities and towns.

The performance space, whatever form it takes, is known as the pitch and contains the performer and anyone in accompaniment. The street performer can be in the middle of a circle, in front of the audience, or simply strolling by during the day. The pitch is something that is extremely important to street performance and many performers lay claim to these spaces and become very territorial. The pitch forms the framework of the performance and acts as a stage for the musician to use. If a good pitch is set up the audience can feel the line of the pitch and generally do not break the intended “fourth wall” unless asked to do so. This creates the feeling of a more professional performance space and lets the musician feel more at ease within their surroundings. Even one of the founding fathers of

America enjoyed and participated in street performing and the setting up of a pitch.

Benjamin Franklin wrote in his autobiography on the excitement and thrills that writing music, and performing it throughout the streets, gave him. This was one of the earliest accounts of a famous American busking and gaining attention through this type of performance. From his autobiography, “My brother, thinking it might turn to account encourag'd me, & put me on composing two occasional ballads. One was called the Light House Tragedy, & containe'd an account of the drowning of Capt. Worthilake with his two daughters; the other was a sailor song on the taking of Teach or Blackbeard the Pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the grub-street ballad style, and when they were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being recent, having made a great noise. This flatter'd my vanity. But my father discourag'd me. Verse-makers were always beggars; so I escap'd being a poet, most probably a very bad one.” (Silverman).In this small example the competing elements of street performance are shown. The way that the writer and musician feels about the music that they perform is the main point of street performance, but the statement also conveys society’s feelings about street performers as beggars. Both of these elements are still a major part of American street music.

History continues to reflect how these performances were a part of many social gatherings, particularly during the Revolutionary era when county courts held their Quarter Sessions, which were local court meetings held four times a year. Sam Adams and Patrick Henry were both known to perform for the crowds that gathered in front of the court house. “A large crowd paraded through town, then gathered for a band concert, everyone sang the ‘American Song of Liberty,’ to the tune of ‘God Save the King,’ the new lyrics being provided for the occasion by none other than Sam Adams.” (Baird). In America, the right to perform publicly, with any lyrical content, was and continues to be a right that people hold dear. Different communities also brought new sounds and ways of performing that propelled street music into the lives of many.

The immigrant community that flooded the streets of America in the 1700s was filled with buskers and street musicians attempting to create a life in the new America. This influx of different styles and types of performance became central to the population and spread throughout the country as a means of communication and cultural distribution. It was the buskers and street musicians that created the diversity of style that influenced American music.

The African American experience was one of the most important contributions to street performance. Throughout slavery, people took great risks to communicate through song and public performances were often the only way to express sadness, hostility and information to one another in a

safe environment. After abolition, Bessie Smith, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Eubie Blake, Reverend Gary Davis, Professor Longhair, and Louis Armstrong were the beginnings of popular street music within the African American community, yet there are countless others who carried on the tradition of creating music using life experiences. As early as the 1800s, there are accounts of street performances in New Orleans, “...The music consisted of two drums and a stringed instrument...which no doubt was imported from Africa. On top of the finger board was the rude figure of a Man in a sitting posture, and two pegs behind him to which the strings were fastened. The body was a Calabash.” (Baird) Professor Longhair, one off the most prolific pianists, continued this tradition in New Orleans in the 1930s, “He taught himself to play piano on a battered upright some neighbors had abandoned in an ally. At the same time, he was tap-dancing in the streets for spare change and making occasional appearances as an orange crate drummer with a children's band." (Palmer). As America continued into the contemporary world, these musicians would influence a great number of performers that became popular in the mainstream. Certain types of music, that were formed in the streets, such as blues and jazz, became American music. Even though street performance was changing the musical landscape, the musicians still faced many stereotypes and social stigmas.

The importance of protecting the rights of street performers in America was historically driven by our right to free speech. In Boston, a law was passed in 1858 that continued until the 1970s that forbade a woman

performer from walking in the street without a male escort. This battle for the rights of street musicians continues through to our contemporary world and these older laws, while hard to change, can still be challenged for their legitimacy and effect on the people.

Street performing, in any form, has always held a social stigma that has been detrimental to the artist. The amount of legislation that has been passed against performing in public is extensive and the legal battles continue currently. The group entitled Community Arts Advocates, Inc. is one of the world's leading defenders of street performance. This group, led by a street performer Steven Baird, has fought for the rights of musicians and performers throughout the years. The court battles range from early court decrees that banned street performance in Boston in 1869 and New York in 1935 to the Ninth Circuit Appeals Federal Court Case Berger vs. Seattle on June 24, 2009 where Berger won with a vote of 8-3. (Baird) These cases continue to place a large amount of legality into the element of free speech that is inherent in American society and while often difficult to fight, show how important these rights are to street performers and musicians.

The majority of street performance occurs in cities around the country and officially sanctioned performance began in Boston and New York City. From 1975 to 1979, Robert Kiley headed the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority in Boston and began the first subway arts program entitled Arts on the Line and Music under Boston. These programs began government involvement of and control of public spaces under the city.

Kiley then brought his programs to New York City. An official listing of legal street performers currently exists in New York and many can be found within the subway tunnels and stations throughout the city. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) established a program in 1987 to clean up the subways and to make a rider's journey more enjoyable. Each year, Music Under New York (MUNY) selects musicians to perform in the subway stations. "The MUNY program schedules musicians (as well as a smaller number of other entertainers) to perform, amplified if they wish, in twenty-three designated spots on subway mezzanines, in commuter railroad terminals, and seasonally at Yankee and Shea stadiums." (Tannenbaum). This authority is viewed in positive and negative ways and somewhat legitimizes the art but also registers performers with the government and gives Transit authority workers, the subway police, reasons to remove those who perform without permission.

Contemporary American society is flooded with street performers and musicians trying to establish themselves by busking. With the onslaught of videos and technology, this has often been detrimental to this tightly knit community of artists. It has also allowed for many citizens to establish groups and organizations in support of street musicians and the art of pure performance. One of the finest examples of a group creating public appeal and support for these musicians is Playing for Change. This group, founded by Mark Johnson, is centered on "Connecting the World Through Music" and has influenced a countless number of people to contribute monetary

donations and time to expand street music throughout the world. The first produced video was to the song “Stand By Me” and featured Roger Ridley from Santa Monica, CA and other artists from around the world singing and performing the music on the streets. This video led to the creation of an entire company focused on speaking about how music connects people. Now a part of the Concord Music Group, the company prides itself on capturing street performance and documenting how similar the world is regarding music and performance.

By documenting performances from Grandpa Elliot, in New Orleans, Pierre Minetti and many others from the Congo and around the world, Playing for Change has grown to even have a live band perform and tour. This group is an example of the way the street performing and newer technology can be used to influence and inspire people from around the world.

Other examples of modern day street performers that have gained immense popularity through their antics are people like Bob Burck. The Naked Cowboy is one example of a street performer who gained worldwide popularity through performing with a guitar in his underwear on the streets of New York City in Times Square. The Naked Cowboy is an extreme example of street performing in America, yet with the advent of media technology, the Naked Cowboy has worked his appearances into a national chain and has perpetuated an entire company based simply on playing a guitar in your underwear on the streets.

Natalia Paruz, the Saw Lady, is another example of a street performer who has gained an immense amount of popularity and used technology to enhance sales of her music. She has documented her performances and travels so that anyone with access can follow her life as a street performer. Through using a saw as an instrument, she has forced many people to reconsider what musical performance is and how street musicians can use any object to create music. The use of a saw as an instrument is not a new thing for music but the way that she has gained and perpetuated her popularity on the internet and through appearances suggests that people want and enjoy different types of musical performance on the street.

Street performers and buskers in America have always played a pivotal role in representing the people. Without these musicians and their advocates, the 1960s protest movement would not have been as successful in inspiring the masses. The “be-ins” in San Francisco and other cities around the country helped to move social change. The many protest songs and folk performances that were written and held throughout the country forced the populace to listen and inspired countless people and musicians. Street performance continues in multiple forms today but is still rooted in the foundations of American life and culture. Playing music to entertain and to gain donations is a fixture within American society and continues with or without support from the mainstream. These musicians demonstrate the inherent necessity of music for our country and encourage the people to listen.

Street performing in America has been a part of our American culture since the founding fathers. It was influential in the immigrant and slavery time periods, as well as during the protest and social change movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Today, it continues to represent American society with advocacy groups such as Community Arts Advocacy, Inc. and Playing for Change. The capitalism and drive of America is also demonstrated in street performance through the Naked Cowboy and the Saw Lady, with their websites and public appearances. With the simple construction and use of a pitch, street performers are able to control their own performances and inspire many to realize that music can be just about performance. By doing so, Street Performing represents the entirety of American culture and society as seen from and through the streets.

Further Reading

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